CHAPTER 12.2: THUNDER

THE POLICE KILLED MY HUSBAND!
I NEED YOUR TESTIMONY!
SHIINA ... NO!
TAJIMA MIGHT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WINNING OR LOSING!
WE HAVE TO LET HIM KNOW!
IT HAPPENED, ALL OF IT! IT DOESN'T EVEN CONCERN YOU.
IT'S JUST GOING TO GET US INTO TROUBLE.
EVEN IF HER HUSBAND IS FOUND INNOCENT ...
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... IT'S STILL NONE OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY.
PRETEND SHE NEVER EXISTED!

OH...
THANK YOU.
YOU?
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AFTER THE DECISION OF THE JURY...
BUT I COULDN'T SAY THE SAME FOR ANOTHER DISTRICT...
HAD HE BEEN INCARCERATED HERE, IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A PROBLEM.
THE COURT GENERALLY DOES NOT CONSIDER THE REQUESTS FROM THE FAMILY OF THE LAWYER WHO REPRESENTS THE CONDEMNED.
IS IT COMMON?
HAVE YOU EVER GONE THROUGH SUCH A SITUATION?

IT IS DIFFICULT TO GIVE ADVICE IN SUCH A CASE
ESPECIALLY IN THIS COUNTRY...
WE BELIEVE THAT DIRTY LAUNDRY SHOULD BE WASHED BY THE FAMILY
BY THAT I MEAN
THOSE OF US WHO AREN'T PART OF THE SYSTEM DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE A SAY
FOR EXAMPLE?
I DON'T KNOW
AN EXAMPLE...
I GUESS I WON'T GIVE YOU ONE AFTER ALL.
WHAT IMPACT WOULD MY OPINION HAVE ANYWAYS...?
THANKS FOR THE COFFEE
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YEAH, I'M FREE ALL DAY TOMORROW
WELL, I'M NOT GOING THERE RIGHT AWAY
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SO DO YOU THINK YOU CAN STOP WORKING?
NOOO OOO!!
DON'T TALK NONSENSE!
GET A GRIP, NAOKO!
I WANT DOCTOR SHIBATAAA !!!
NOO OO!!
IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT
NOT JUST FOR MY SUPERIORS
BUT ALSO FOR MY LONG-TERM PATIENTS
WELL, I GOTTA GO.
I AM NEEDED
IT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION!!!
I'LL CALL YOU AS SOON AS I ARRIVE.

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SHE HAS A DAUGHTER!

LOOK OUT-SIDE
FOR WHAT?
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU STILL DOING THERE?
YOU DIDN'T LEAVE?
!
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THE STATE WILL PAY HER COMPENSAT-TION WHAT ELSE DOES SHE WANT?
IF HER HUSBAND IS FOUND INNOCENT
SHE'S PUSHING IT TOO FAR
IT'S BE-COME HARASS-MENT! WHAT ELSE IS IT?
IT'S TRUE THAT THE TIMING IS BAD
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WE DON'T KNOW!
IMAGINE FOR A MOM-ENT THAT EVERYTHING SHE SAID WERE TRUE!
!
YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY THAT!
I KNEW IT. THIS IS ALL FOR THE MONEY.
I UNDER-STAND THAT THE MONEY THE GOV-ERNMENT HAS TO PAY WILL BE A LOT
SHE KEEPS SAYING THAT
IF THE POLICE HADN'T INCARCERATED HER HUSBAND, HE'D STILL BE ALIVE TODAY

PUT YOURSELF IN HER PLACE! ONE DAY, YOUR HUSBAND IS LOCKED UP BY THE POLICE...
LIKE A COMMON MURDERER, WHEN HE DID NOTHING!
FURTHERMORE, HE WAS DENIED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE, TO THE POINT THAT HE DIED!
I BELIEVE IN THE MERIT OF HER WORDS.
I THINK WE JUST NEED TO BE CAREFUL.
OF COURSE, MONEY IS IMPORTANT.
SHE EVEN HAS A DAUGHTER
I UNDERSTAND THAT SHE IS STRUGGLING TO REGAIN HIS HONOR.
HER HUSBAND IS NO MORE
YOU'RE HERE?
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HELLO!
I'M GOING TO THE STATION BY CAR, DOES ANYONE WANT TO COME?
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HN?
WHAT'S WRONG?

WE ARE VERY EMBARASSED.
SHE'S BEEN IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE ALL WEEKEND!
EVERYONE HERE IS ON EDGE
SORRY, I DON'T KNOW
I HAVE, HOWEVER, ADVISED HIM NOT TO CONTACT YOU DIRECTLY
BELIEVE ME, I'M CONFUSED
I'LL TRY TO REMEDY THE SITUATION
WE DO NOT WISH FOR THIS CASE TO BECOME WORSE
WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOU TELLING HIM NOT TO DO SO
IT'S UNDERSTOOD, SIR.
I WILL LET HIM KNOW
WE'RE VERY SORRY FOR THAT

THIS CAN'T BE TRUE...
カチャ
lawyer
ITO NAOKO
.....
ARE YOU RE-ASSURED THEN?
SHIINA
I CAN TAKE YOU TO THE STATION, IF YOU WANT
JUST IN CASE...
I'LL GO TOO
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HA…

KOTO-KO!!!
YOU'RE LATE!
DID SOME-THING HAPP-EN?
NO, NOTH-ING SER-IOUS—
AND YOUR UM-BRELLA?
WAS IT NOT RAINING THERE?
IT WAS, BUT I CAME TO THE STATION BY CAR, SO I DIDN'T THINK OF TAKING IT
THERE'S STILL ROOM UNDERNEATH MINE—

I KNOW THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON...
HM...
YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU'VE JUST COME FROM A FUNER-AL

IS THAT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE?
HE HE
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE ABLE TO NOTICE IT
AS IF!
USUALLY, YOU'RE BEAMING
IS THAT SO...?
LET ME HOLD THE UMBRELLA
IF YOU WANT

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HE'LL KNOW THAT I HAD A DATE...
ピンポーン
IT'S ME...
COME IN.
カチャ
OH!
NO.
NOT YET.
I'LL BORROW IT FROM SASAZUKA.
HE MUST HAVE IT.
HAVE YOU READ IT?
WHAT IS IT?
OH, YEAH
I RECEIVED THIS TODAY

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WOMAN?
SHE HAS A CHILD.
I WONDER WHY A WOMAN AS BEAUTIFUL AS HER HAS SUCH A SAD FACE.
.....
IT'S UNBEARABLE.
ISN'T THERE A WAY FOR US TO HELP HER?
JUST LIKE YOU, NOT AIRING YOUR TROUBLES.

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"I WROTE THIS BOOK IN SUCH A WAY THAT ...
MR. X, THE MURDERER OF MY GRANDSON, CAN READ IT AND GRASP THE ESSENCE."

"I HOPE HE WILL BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT KIND OF PERSON I AM."
"A MAN WILLING TO PROTECT HIS FAMILY"
"A MAN WHO WOULD ACT AS A SUPPORT FOR OTHERS"
"A MAN WITHOUT HATRED, WHO WAS LOYAL AND WOULDN'T HURT OTHERS"
"I HAD DONE SO FOR 50 YEARS."

I HOPE THAT MR. X CAN TAKE SOME LESSONS FROM THIS BOOK.
BUT I AM UNDER NO ILLU-SIONS.
HE MAY STILL BE TOO YOUNG.

HOW TO INCLUDE 50 YEARS OF LIFE AND MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND IT?
50 YEARS OF A FULLY LIVED LIFE WHILE HE IS SENTEN-CED TO DEATH

I DEEPLY HOPE THAT HE LEARNS WHAT I WANT HIM TO KNOW
...AND THAT LATER, HE UNDER-STANDS MY PAIN
I HOPE HE UNDER-STANDS...

A MAN WITHOUT HATE, LOYAL, AND NOT WISHING TO HARM ANY-ONE
A MAN WILLING TO LOVE OTHERS AND GIVE BACK TO THEM.
A MAN WILLING TO PROTECT HIS FAM-ILY

I HAVE PERSEVERED ON THIS PATH FOR YEARS
AND I CAN SAY THAT I AM THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH

I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK YOU.
I WAS ABOUT TO GO TO SLEEP.
WHAT IS IT?
DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS MAN?
Mr. Mukoda

NO, I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT HIM.
HE UNDER-WENT INTERRO-GATIONS AFTER BEING APPREHE-NDED BY THE POLICE
HE WAS IN THE SAME JAIL CELL AS YOU
!
OH YEAH
HE HAD A SCAR ON HIS HAND
IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS A BURN
A SCAR ON HIS HAND?
YES
I DON'T REMEMBER HIS FACE VERY WELL
BUT THE SCAR WAS SO IMPRESS-IVE THAT I HAVEN'T FOR-GOTTEN
I THINK IT'S HIM
HOW WAS HE THEN?
HE HAD PROB-LEMS BREATH-ING
AND HE COM-PLAINED OF CHEST PAIN
I REMEM-BER HE AL-WAYS CAME BACK FROM THE INTEPRO-GATON ROOM IN BAD SHAPE

IT'S COMING BACK TO ME... I COULDN'T SLEEP BECAUSE OF IT. HE SCREAMED EVERY NIGHT FOR A DOCTOR.
THE GUARDS WOULD NOT HEAR OF IT.
?
WHY ARE YOU ASKING?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO HIM?
I WILL TELL YOU.
?
HAAA!

MR. SASA-ZUKA!!
HE'S TELLING EVERY-THING TO 042!!
WHERE IS THE PROFESS-OR?!
THEY'RE HAVING A CON-VERSA-TION
DAMN, THIS DOESN'T WORK!!
SORRY, I HADN'T REAL-IZED.
AND... IT'S THE WEEKEND. YOU DON'T NEED TO KEEP AN EXTRA EYE ON EVERY-THING
I SEE, SO THAT'S HIS WIFE
HM... AND IF I TESTI-FIED IN COURT...
... HE COULD BE EXON-ERATED?
I CAN'T BE SURE OF THAT ...
... BUT THE ONE THING SHE WANTS IS FOR YOU TO TESTIFY IN COURT.

YES...
DO YOU THINK THAT I CAN TESTIFY?
IN THAT CASE...
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I MUST DO IT
SHOULDN'T I?

YOU REALLY ARE BECOMING MORE HU-MAN.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE ADMIN-ISTRATIVE PART.
I WILL DO EVERY-THING I CAN FOR YOU TO TESTIFY.
HOPE-FULLY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO.
MGN
MR. YAMAGUCHI WOULD BE PROUD.

.....
.....
!
WHAT
IT'S BETTER LIKE THAT, DON'T YOU THINK?
NO, NOT AT ALL!!
YOU'RE WALK-ING A DANGER-OUS PATH!!
HEY. NO NEED TO RAISE YOUR VOICE!
042 MIGHT HEAR US
I'M READY TO TAKE ANY RESPONS-IBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS
SASA-ZUKA
CALM DOWN
YOU SOUND LIKE AN IDIOT
THIS IS MY WAY OF PAYING TRIBUTE TO MR YAMA-GUCHI.
IS THIS HOW A 33 YEAR OLD MAN BE-HAVES?
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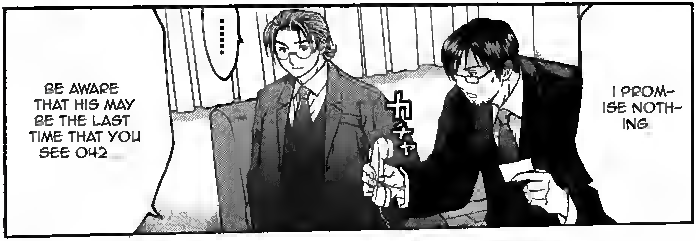
!!
HE STILL HAS THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES* HANGING OVER HIS HEAD ANY-WAYS
IT'S A WAY FOR HIM TO FEEL MORE FREE-DOM.
AND FROM A PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE POINT OF VIEW, A CONFRONT-ATION DURING A HEARING SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT
ALL OF THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PAPER-WORK.

 *SWORD OF DAMOCLES: GREEK ALLUSION TO IMMINENT AND EVERY-PRESENT PERIL

GENTLEMEN, I ASK FOR YOU TO LOOK AT THE DOCUMENTS WHICH YOU WERE GIVEN.
THIS IS THE MONTHLY LIST OF PROJ-ECTS.
THE FIRST CONCERNS A DAY-LONG OPEN HOUSE ORGANIZED SCHOOL-CHILDREN.
THE SECOND IS A VOLUN-TEER ACTIVITY PROPOSED BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT AND CLEANLI-NESS.
THE THIRD IS UNDER EXTRACURRICU-LAR ACTIVITES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE CULTUR-AL FESTIVAL.
THE FOURTH PROJECT CONCERNS A REDESIGN OF LINK PROTOCOL WITH THE STUD-ENTD AND THEIR PARENTS.
THE FIFTH CONCERNS THE DRESS OF SUPERVISING STAFF OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL SETTING.
THE SIXTH —

IT PASS-ED!!
WELL-PLAYED.
SINCE NOBODY THERE SEEMED AWARE OF THE CASE...
I THOUGHT THAT THIS PROJECT COULD BE ON THE SAME LIST AS EVERYTHING ELSE
EVEN THE GEN-ERAL SUPER-VISOR AGREED.
THAT ANY INTER-ACTION BETWEEN 042 AND THE AUDIENCE WOULD BE MANAGE-ABLE
AND THERE'S NO QUES-TION THAT 042 CAN'T BE IN CON-TACT WITH JUST ANY-ONE
A DOCU-MENT WAS SIGNED LIMITING THE FLOW OF PEOPLE TO JUST THOSE PERTINENT TO THE CASE
THE CONTRACT PROVIDES 15 MIN-UTES FOR HIS TEST-MONY ON SATURDAY AND SUN-DAY
IF ANY-ONE THERE HAD A PROBLEM WITH IT, HE KEPT OPPOSING THEM.
GOOD JOB, CHIEF!

IF IT HAD GONE WRONG, WE'D HAVE HAD TO STOP EVERY-THING
HM?
SASA-ZUKA...
YOU SHOULD CALL THE LAW-YER.
HERE
HIS PHONE NUM-BER.


I PROM-ISE NOTH-ING.
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BE AWARE THAT HIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME THAT YOU SEE 042.

GO, CALL HIM...

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